



# Kids CAN PLAY!

Encouraging children to be active at home, at school, and in their communities

## Physical activity levels of children and youth in Nova Scotia

The Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute's CANPLAY study (Canadian Physical activity Levels Among Youth study) has been used to measure physical activity levels of children and youth using pedometers to count daily steps. Although the majority of the analyses in this bulletin focus on combined data collected in years 7 and 8 (2011-2014), some analyses also reflect trends over time, where otherwise stated. Combining years 7 and 8 of data collection, the CANPLAY study showed that Canadian children, ages 5 to 19, took approximately 11,000 daily steps on average. Children and youth in Nova Scotia took approximately the same number of daily steps as the national average, at roughly 10,800 steps.

### Canada and regions

Children and youth in Nova Scotia took fewer steps than children and youth living in the Yukon in 2011-2014.

### Child characteristics

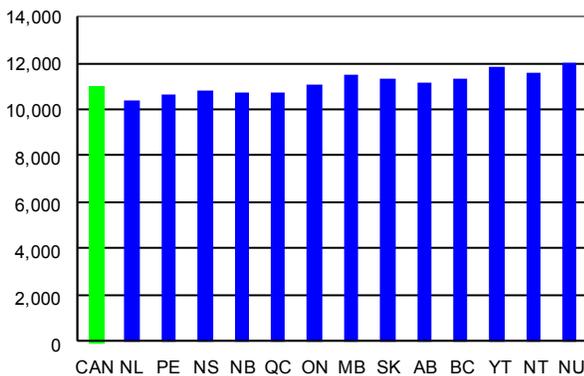
In 2011-2014, boys and girls took a similar number of steps on average in Nova Scotia. This pattern differed from that found nationally, in which boys took more daily steps on average compared to girls.

Provincially and nationally, daily steps decreased with increasing age. In Nova Scotia, this was particularly evident when comparing younger children with older teens. In Nova Scotia, 5 to 10 year-old boys took more daily steps than 5 to 10 year-old girls. This differed from the national pattern, in which gender-related differences appeared for all age groups.

In Nova Scotia, children who participated in organized physical activity and sport took more daily steps on average than children who did not participate in these types of activities. This pattern is similar to that found nationally.

**FIGURE 1**

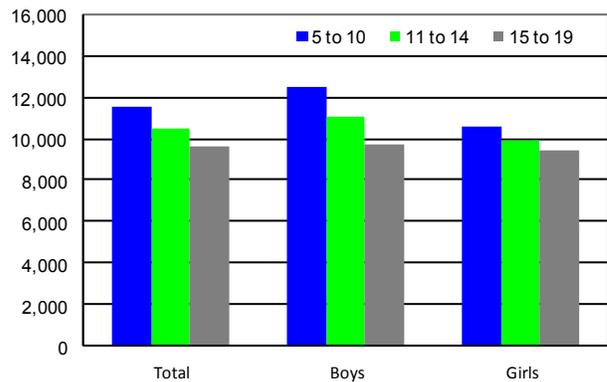
Average steps, Canada and regions



CANPLAY studies, 2011-2014, CFLRI

**FIGURE 2**

Average steps by age and gender of child, Nova Scotia



CANPLAY studies, 2011-2014, CFLRI



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**Parent and household characteristics**

In Nova Scotia, there were no significant differences between a child’s average daily steps and parental education level or household income. This differed from the national pattern in which children whose parents had a university education took more steps than those whose parents had a college education and children living in the highest income households took more steps than those living in lower income households.

In Nova Scotia, children whose parents said that they were substantially more active than other parents took more daily steps than children whose parents said that they were just as active as other parents. Nationally, children of parents who consider themselves substantially more active took significantly more steps than who said that they were slightly less active.

**Trends in activity level over time**

There were no significant changes over time in the number of steps taken by children and youth in Nova Scotia since 2005-2007. The next section looks at trends over time in this province.

**Child characteristics**

In earlier years, boys in Nova Scotia took more steps than girls; this was not the case in 2009-2014. This differed from the national

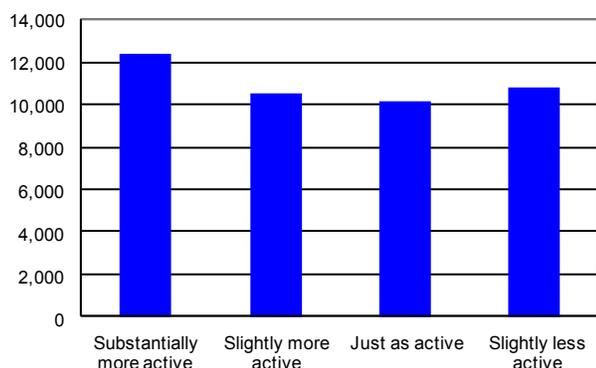
situation, in which boys consistently took more steps on average than girls since baseline (2005-2007). An age-related decrease in steps appeared for all study years both provincially and nationally. Within Nova Scotia and nationally, a significant relationship between children’s participation in organized sport and physical activity and higher steps taken appeared for each of the four data collection cycles.

**Parent and household characteristics**

In 2011-2014, no significant associations existed between a child’s average daily steps and parental education in Nova Scotia. This was similar to earlier years in the province. In earlier years, there were no significant differences in average steps taken by parent activity level. In 2011-2014, however, children whose parents reported being substantially more active than other parents took more daily steps than children whose parents reported being just as active as other parents. Nationally, an association was evident in most years. Although there were no associations between child’s average daily steps and household income in 2011-2014, there was an association with household income in earlier years (2009-2011) of the CANPLAY study in the province. Nationally, an association between a child’s average steps and household income persisted over time, whereby children living in the highest income households took more steps than those from lower income households.

**FIGURE 3**

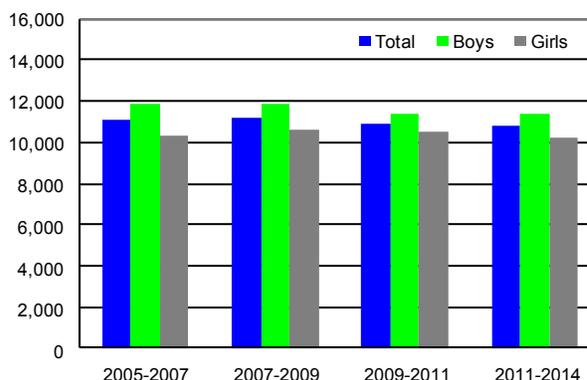
Average steps by parent’s activity level, Nova Scotia



CANPLAY studies, 2011-2014, CFLRI

**FIGURE 4**

Trends in average steps over time by gender in Nova Scotia



CANPLAY studies, 2005-2014, CFLRI

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